

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY INTRODUCES BILL TO COMMEMORATE HUDSON RIVER AND LAKE CHAMPLAIN MILESTONES

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that he has introduced legislation to establish a national observance of the Henry Hudson, Robert Fulton and Samuel de Champlain anniversaries in 2009. That year will mark the 400th anniversary of the voyage of Henry Hudson, the first European to sail up the Hudson River; the 400th anniversary of the voyage of Samuel de Champlain, the first European to discover and explore Lake Champlain; and the 200th anniversary of the voyage of Robert Fulton, the first person to use steam navigation on a commercial basis.

"So much of the history of New York, and indeed of the history of the United States, stems from these three events," said Hinchey. "My bill will allow us to commemorate these historically important milestones appropriately."

The first European exploration of the Hudson River and Lake Champlain, and the introduction of steam navigation to maritime commerce are celebrated both in the United States and abroad. In 1909, Americans celebrated the 300th anniversaries of these events with maritime celebrations and art exhibitions. The Dutch built the first replica of Hudson's ship, the Half Moon, and sent it up the Hudson River for the observance. Congress recognized the 350th anniversary by establishing a similar commission to coordinate federal participation in the 1959 celebrations.

New York State recently enacted legislation establishing a state commemoration commission. The commission proposed by Hinchey's legislation will coordinate educational, cultural and historical projects while cooperating and assisting the programs and activities conceived by New York, New Jersey and Vermont. Hinchey's bill will also facilitate Hudson-Fulton-Champlain-related activities throughout the United States, ensure that they provide a lasting legacy and long-term public benefit, and cultivate international involvement in celebration activities.